

DPW UPDATE

March 2003

Agent by Day, Artist by Night

by Jessica Eslinger

Darlene Haslett-Kitchen isn't out of her gourd – just out of her “gourd shack” when she's at work. She etches, paints, stains and decorates the inedible vine-fruit during her spare time, transforming ordinary nature into environmental masterpieces.

Darlene, Supervising Real Property Agent for DPW Airports, got the idea two years ago. At a little boutique in San Ysabel, she came across a collection of gourd birdhouses. She bought several books featuring varieties of beautiful, unusual, and captivating gourd artwork and decided to pursue the hobby herself. Six months later, she built her studio and the gourd experimentations began.

Located behind her Steele Canyon home, Darlene's “gourd shack” shelters 120 gourds and a plethora of carving, burning and shaping tools. Shelves of paints, dyes, beads, stones, and other natural décor, drape the walls of the renovated storage shed. On weekends and summer nights, Darlene enjoys working in this fully stocked artist studio, focusing all her attention on her most recent creation.

“The gourd tells you what it would look like,” said Darlene as she described the uniqueness of each. “It's wherever your imagination takes you - that's what's so fascinating.”

They've all got different textures and distinctive patterns, so when Darlene selects one, she tries to accentuate the “natural gourd” as much as possible. Sometimes, natural patterns are uninteresting, so she envelops them in her latest artistic vision. Most are adorned with bones, wood, stone carvings, antlers, coyote claws, teeth and feathers. Many are colored with various shades of leather dyes and others are etched or wood-

burned to represent pictures and postcards.

“Gourds are such an intriguing medium,” said Darlene. “They're hard but permeable, and their variety is infinite. You can carve, wood-burn, stain, paint and inlay all at once.”

Because of their endless possibilities, each gourd art takes a considerable amount of time to create. Her wood-burned gourds require 100 hours of detailed artwork, and her dyed gourds take at least 25 to 30 hours to complete. She said that if properly cared for, the decorated, durable gourds last forever.

Her first batch of gourd art became gifts for her family. She admits she was a little discouraged at first, but those eight original pieces were a hit. She continued and now she's designed at least ten more.

“They're kind of like my children,” said Darlene.

If her inventory increases a little more, she might begin selling the pieces, but right now her work is still very new and personal.

“My co-workers have been a great source of encouragement,” said Darlene.



Darlene and three of her unique gourds

She values their opinions, so whenever she's completed a gourd, she brings it to her office at Gillespie Field for a little show and tell. "They give me incentive to continue," she added.

She plans to continue expanding her gourd collection and pursue new decorative outlets in future creations.

What's the Big Idea?

When private developers begin construction on their land, they make deposits to the County in order to cover all inspection costs for their property. Sometimes these deposits last for years, while other times the deposits aren't adequate to cover all necessary inspection costs. These deficient deposits were becoming a bog problem for Land Development staff because without a way to monitor them, their accumulation created a \$27,000 deficit. So Derek Gade, LUEG program manager, stepped in to ensure more "seamless" service for developers.

Chandra Wallar, Assistant Director of Land Development, asked Gade to find a way to monitor the accounts and detect potential deficits *before* they occur. He spent two weeks working with Administrative Analyst II Albert Sakr to research a solution. With a **good idea** in mind, Gade solicited help from financial staff to map developer expenditures and create a three-tiered letter notification plan. In his plan, letters were to be sent to the developer when account expenditures reached 80%, 90% and 100% levels.

"Overall, the implementation of the Deficit Prevention Plan in our section has greatly reduced the potential for deficit project accounts," said Gade. "Additional deposits are received in a timely manner before deficits occur."

Once the plan was implemented, the overall deficit quickly dropped to \$6,000 and customer service has greatly improved in the department.

Good ideas like Derek's identify ways to make current DPW processes more efficient. The emphasis is on teamwork, so this year's Good Ideas Program goal is to create interdepartmental and intersectional partnerships, cross training, and enhanced customer service. DPW sections are completing their FY 2002-03 good idea reports this month.

Training

Intro to Stakeholder Analysis: Part One

by Kirsten Aaboe-Hope, Training Officer

What is a Stakeholder?

Dictionary.com has two definitions of "stakeholder." The first is "one who holds the bets in a game or contest." The second is "one who has a share or an interest, as in an enterprise." The latter is the definition we're concerned with. Stakeholders are all those who have a stake (a share or an interest) in a particular issue or system, as well as all those who affect, and are affected by, policy decisions and actions within a particular system.

If I'm working on a County project, there are numerous stakeholders involved. They could be County or State employees, County residents, tourists or business people. Stakeholders can be groups of people, organizations, institutions, individuals, policy

makers, planners, tradesmen, researchers, future generations, residents, service providers, and service recipients. There are:

- *Key stakeholders*: those who have a significant influence on the success of a project.
- *Active stakeholders*: those who affect or determine a decision or action in the system.
- *Passive stakeholders*: those who are affected by this decision or action.
- *Primary stakeholders*: the intended beneficiaries of a project, those who are important.
- *Secondary stakeholders*: those who perform as intermediaries.

What is Stakeholder Analysis?

We need to identify and take into consideration the concerns and priorities of our various stakeholders, and, depending on the project, these might be very different people. Their involvement may be central and constant, peripheral and periodic, or any combination.

At DPW, knowing our stakeholders is key to providing balanced, quality service to communities. Next month we'll discuss how stakeholders impact our development decisions.

Safety

HAND ME DOWN THAT WALKING CANE!

by Donna Turbyfill, Deputy Director

Right beneath your feet is one of the best exercise machines: the pavement. Experts agree that walking is one of the best exercises, and studies keep showing more health benefits. Walking is simple: put one foot in front of the other.

Studies have shown that moderate walkers – those who walk a couple of miles at 15 – 20 minutes per mile – earn just about the same benefit as “race walking,” traveling 10-11 minute miles. Even better is the news that two 15-minute walks each day are just as effective as walking around a track for an hour straight. Why walk?

- Reduced risk of heart disease
- Alleviation of depression
- Increased muscular strength
- Alleviation of lower back pain
- Improved coronary circulation
- Reduced risk of infection
- Reduced risk of hypertension
- Maintaining weight loss

If your job's in the field on a crew, a simple walk in the evening can help loosen your muscles and provide muscular strength in areas you may not use in your regular job. In the office, you'll come back from a walk with a clearer mind and a fresher attitude.

DIVISION NEWS:

Transportation

Solar Power @ Palomar

Pedestrians and vehicles using McClellan-Palomar's long-term parking lot have finally seen the light; three new solar powered lamps were recently installed to improve safety and security at the airport.

Built with solar panels and gel-cell batteries, the high-energy gas discharge lamps are both power outage and bad weather proof.

"The lamps are very appropriate for this part of the airport because we don't have to dig trenches or drill holes in the earth for installation," said Floyd Best, airport manager.

"They enable us to keep from disturbing the landfill that is beneath the road and parking area."

Protecting the environment and improving safety were key reasons for selecting the lights. If they prove successful, plans to install them at other parts of the airport, as well as at other County airports, might be in the works.



Management Services

New Web Design

DPW's Web site has been reformatted and redesigned. After an intense four-month process, 4,300 Web pages, 25,555 hyperlinks and 1,495 pictures have been changed and/or added to the site, giving it a fresh new look and feel.

The goal was to make it more "customer friendly" and to reduce the amount of mouse clicks visitors used to find desired information. So, in coordination with all other County departments, text on the site was based on topics, instead of organizational structure, and new menus were added.

"We've always had a great Web site," said Bill Polick, Public Information Officer and Webmaster. "We've won awards and this new look makes it even better."

"Pages are easier to find, information is more readily available and we've improved the use of pictures and other graphic elements," he said.

Since changes occur on a daily basis, Polick continues to make additions as appropriate.

When was the last time you checked out, or referred someone to, our site?

Engineering Services

Locals Dig Fallbrook Sidewalk Project

Local dignitaries joined District 5 Supervisor Bill Horn and DPW staff for groundbreaking ceremonies in Fallbrook for a \$1.02 million sidewalk construction project last month.

The project includes construction of new concrete curb, gutter and sidewalks on the north side of Fallbrook St. between Alturas and Heald; to widen Fallbrook St. between Alturas and Mission Rd. and to provide a parking lane on the north side; and, to underground overhead utilities on Fallbrook St. between Alturas and Mission Rd.



(l-r) District 5 Press Secretary John Culea introduces Supervisor Bill Horn and DPW's Project Manager, Steve Ron, during groundbreaking ceremonies in Fallbrook.